

<http://www.parenting.com/article/mom-congress-lesson-plan-for-change?page=0,1>

STEP 1: BUILD YOUR CASE

So you have a problem with your child's school. It's easy to wait around for someone else to notice and take action. But you're a passionate mom, too, and don't want that to happen after your child has moved on. You need to get the ball rolling now -- change always takes time.

Identify your goal,

Form a strategy team,

Do your research,

Consider the opposing viewpoint,

Work together with your group to create a mission statement,

Develop an elevator pitch,

Lobby your principal, teachers, and district superintendent.

STEP 2: CREATE YOUR COALITION AND SPREAD THE WORD

Now that you have your foundation and key players in place, it's time to inform -- and motivate -- the school community to join your cause. There are two main keys to success: Spread the word in as many ways as you can and give parents lots of different options for getting involved.

Create a fact sheet that outlines the main points in your case,

Brand your message,

Start a Facebook page. Or a website. Or a Twitter account. Or all three!

Launch a petition drive,

Have coffee with the board,

Loop in your PTA/PTO,

Build local alliances,

Contact local media,

Brainstorm fund raisers and research possible grants.

STEP 3: Take your plan to the school board

The school board is the group that holds the purse strings -- and the power to green-light new projects. You'll need to prepare a strong presentation to snag their votes. What you'll need to do:

Recruit audience support,

Write your script,

Be prepared to debate and defend your position,

Maintain a friendly and courteous tone,

Say a "thank you" twice!

Leave materials behind,

Rally your troops.

If you can, plan to gather at least your strategy team for a postmortem and to keep motivation running high. Because no matter what happens this round, you know you'll keep fighting for what your kids need -- and deserve! Join the fight for better schools today!